

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for providing a user interface for defining an electronic message handling rule, the method comprising:

receiving a request to create an electronic message handling rule;

in response to the request, identifying a context in which the request to create the electronic message handling rule was received; and

providing a user interface for defining the electronic message handling rule, wherein the contents of the user interface are customized based on the identified context.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the customized user interface for defining the electronic message handling rule comprises one or more user interface objects for defining one or more conditions for the rule and one or more user interface objects for defining one or more actions to be performed if the one or more conditions are satisfied.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining one or more conditions for the rule are a subset of all of the possible conditions for the rule.

4. The method of Claim 2, wherein the context comprises the context of reading a received electronic mail message.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on the identity of a sender of the received electronic mail message.

6. The method of Claim 4, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for

setting a condition for the rule based on a subject of the received electronic mail message.

7. The method of Claim 4, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on the identity of one or more intended recipients of the electronic mail message.

8. The method of Claim 2, wherein the context comprises the context of creating an electronic mail message.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on the identity of the intended recipient of the created electronic mail message.

10. The method of Claim 8, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on a subject of the created electronic mail message.

11. The method of Claim 2, wherein the context comprises the context of creating an alert subscription.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein the one or more conditions for the rule comprise receiving an alert electronic mail message generated as a result of the alert subscription.

13. The method of Claim 2, wherein the context comprises the context of selecting a name.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on the selected name.

15. The method of Claim 13, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on a subject of a received electronic mail message.

16. A computer-readable medium comprising computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform the method of Claim 1.

17. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of Claim 1.

18. A contextually sensitive user interface for defining a electronic message handling rule, the user interface comprising:

one or more user interface objects for specifying one or more conditions for the rule, the one or more user interface objects selected at least in part based upon a context in which a request to create the electronic message handling rule was received; and

one or more user interface objects for defining one or more actions to be performed if the one or more specified conditions are satisfied.

19. The contextually sensitive user interface of Claim 18, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on the identity of a sender of the received electronic mail message when the context comprises the context of reading a received electronic mail message.

20. The contextually sensitive user interface of Claim 18, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on a subject of the received electronic mail message when the context comprises the context of reading a received electronic mail message.

21. The contextually sensitive user interface of Claim 18, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on the identity of one or more intended recipients of the electronic mail message when the context comprises the context of reading a received electronic mail message.

22. The contextually sensitive user interface of Claim 18, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on the identity of the intended recipient of the created electronic mail message when the context comprises the context of creating an electronic mail message.

23. The contextually sensitive user interface of Claim 18, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on a subject of the created electronic mail message when the context comprises the context of creating an electronic mail message.

24. The contextually sensitive user interface of Claim 18, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on the selected name when the context comprises the context of selecting a name.

25. The contextually sensitive user interface of Claim 18, wherein the one or more user interface objects for defining the one or more conditions for the rule comprise

a user interface object for setting a condition for the rule based on a subject of a received electronic mail message when the context comprises the context of selecting a name.

26. A computer-readable medium comprising computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to display the user interface of Claim 18.

27. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of displaying the user interface of Claim 18.